



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council Committee of the Whole

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk (860)441-6640
Town Manager
(860)441-6630

Mayor Harry A. Watson, Councilors Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Heather Sherman Bond, Catherine Kolnaski, Frank O'Beirne, Jr., Rita M. Schmidt, John F. Scott, Paulann H. Sheets, and James L. Streeter.

Tuesday, June 12, 2007

6:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

SPECIAL MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Watson called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Members Absent: Councilor Bond

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent and Executive Assistant Nicki Bresnayan.

3. Calendar and Communications

None.

4. Approval of Minutes

2007-0151 Approval of Minutes (Committee of the Whole)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council Committee of the Whole of June 5, 2007 are hereby accepted and approved.

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to adopt.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 7 - Mayor Watson, Councilor Bartinik, Jr., Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Abstain: 1 - Councilor O'Beirne, Jr.

5. NEW BUSINESS

2007-0142 FYE 2007 Suspense List

Discussed

Nancy Dytko, Tax Collector, explained that the suspense list is compiled every year in accordance with State Statutes to identify accounts that are determined to be uncollectible, in many cases because the bills have been returned to the Tax Collector's Office as undeliverable. The taxes are still due. Those individuals with unpaid motor vehicle taxes will be prevented from registering their vehicles by DMV.

A motion was made by Councilor Bartinik, Jr., seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0152 Proposed Adjustments to Police Retiree Pension Benefits

Discussed

Doug Ackerman, Director of Administrative Services, explained that pension agreements contain provisions for the review and adjustment of retiree benefits. Mr. Ackerman has met with the

various groups, and developed recommendations for the three groups. Mr. Ackerman reviewed the recommended increases and a summary of the total increase in costs to the Town.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Streeter, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0153 Proposed Adjustments to Non-Union Police Retiree Benefits

Discussed

See 6/12/07 Committee of the Whole discussion under 2007-0152 Proposed Adjustments to Police Retiree Pension Benefits.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Scott, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0154 Proposed Adjustments to Steelworker Retiree Pension Benefits

Discussed

See 6/12/07 Committee of the Whole discussion under 2007-0152 Proposed Adjustments to Police Retiree Pension Benefits.

A motion was made by Councilor Kolnaski, seconded by Councilor Scott, that this matter be Recommended for a Resolution.

The motion carried unanimously

2007-0132 Charter Revision Commission

Discussed

The Committee of the Whole interviewed three remaining candidates for the Charter Revision Commission (Susan Sutherland, Barry Boodman, and John Wirzbicki). Councilors Scott and O'Beirne, candidates for the Commission, did not participate in the interviews.

The Mayor asked Councilors to resubmit their preferences to Assistant to the Town Manager Lee Vincent before Friday.

Town Manager Oefinger noted that the appointments must be made before the end of the month. There will be a special Committee of the Whole meeting on June 19th. The Town Manager suggested that Councilors develop a list of more than nine names.

Councilor Bartinik left the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Roll Call: Members Present: Mayor Watson, Councilor Kolnaski, Councilor O'Beirne, Jr., Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Scott, Councilor Sheets and Councilor Streeter
Members Absent: Councilor Bartinik, Jr. and Councilor Bond

2003-0177 Renovations & Additions to Groton School Facilities - Phase I

Discussed

Gary Schneider, Director of Public Works, and Scott Celella of JCJ Architects, reviewed a report on the Kolnaski School window issue and the Town's attempts to minimize the impact to the schedule. Mr. Schneider reviewed the criteria followed when looking at options that provided for use of the facility by December 31, 2007. The solution was to provide the code-compliant window systems. Mr. Schneider reviewed the changes from the original design. Cost estimates were developed and the cost submitted by the current contractor was determined to fall within the acceptable price range. Rebidding the project would delay the school opening until the summer recess in 2008. Temporary window systems were installed to allow other work to proceed. The additional cost of the windows is \$1,062,780, which exceeds the undesignated fund balance by \$388,000. Mr. Schneider reviewed recommendations of areas in the project that could be delayed in order to have sufficient funds to complete the project by December 31st. Areas identified for

postponement include Furniture, Fixtures, and Equipment (FF&E) and Technology, Science and Equipment (TS&E); physical education equipment; exterior signage; site work; commissioning; move coordination; staff assignment; environmental engineering; and moving expenses. Mr. Schneider reviewed the suggested schedule and options for additional funding to complete the deferred components. With the temporary window systems, the building meets code and it will be covered by insurance during construction.

Councilor O'Beirne asked about the monetary responsibility for the window problem and expressed concern with passing the cost onto the taxpayers. Mr. Schneider explained that his memo determines a path to solve the problem within the existing allocation for the school, without addressing responsibility and who will pay for what, which still needs to be determined.

Mr. Ceella noted there will be shared responsibility and the total cost of the windows will not be borne by the taxpayers in Groton. He noted there are a number of responsible parties and firms including JCJ. That analysis needs to be done, but the objective is to get the school opened.

The bond attorney has been consulted regarding changes to the project and funding options including using the same model used for the WPCF upgrade (reallocation of CIP funds), but the Town has not received an opinion yet.

Councilor Sheets noted, and the Town Manager confirmed, that the Town is not waiving any claims it may have for the additional costs of the windows.

Discussion followed on what would happen if a hurricane struck with the temporary windows in place. Mr. Schneider explained that the Town would install additional plywood with the existing workforce. Plywood covers are not a viable option for a permanent solution because the plywood would have to be stored on site with designated resources on site to install them at all times.

Councilor Streeter asked to see other cost savings figures and the costs associated with other contingency items. Mr. Schneider assured the Committee that the Town is currently insuring the building and damage costs in the event of a hurricane would be covered. Although contingency dollars will be depleted, there are few remaining opportunities for surprises because the major systems and site issues are all addressed.

2003-0198 Public Water & Sewer on Flanders Road/Industrial area
Discussed

The first meeting of the Flanders Road Utility Committee has been scheduled for Monday, June 25th at 6:00 p.m. The Town Manager has received responses from interested Flanders Road residents.

2006-0282 School Improvement Project - Phase II
Discussed

The first meeting of the Phase II School Design Committee has been scheduled for Thursday, June 14th at 6:00 p.m.

2007-0072 Citizen Committee on Property Tax Relief - Update
Discussed

No date has been chosen yet for the first meeting of the Committee.

2007-0138 Gravel Street Pump Station Lease
Discussed

The Town Manager has received a revised lease from the developer, but it has not yet been reviewed. This item will be placed on the next agenda for discussion.

6. Consideration of Committee Referral Items as per Town Council Referral List

2006-0299 Homeless Shelter Needs
Recommended for Deletion

2006-0303 FYE 2008 Budget
Recommended for Deletion

7. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Councilor Scott, seconded by Councilor Kolnaski, to adjourn the meeting at 8:10 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.